SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

THE EPISTLE.

THE Signs of the Times are doubtless of great Moment, and therefore recommended by our Saviour himself; for by reason of Men's incredulity therein, they are exposed not only to the greatest Calamities in this World, but eternal Misery in the next. This being a particular Mark wherewith the Ungodly are branded in holy Scripture, *That they mind not the works of God, nor regard the operation of his hand.*

All which may be occasion'd by Men's prodigious affections to earthly Things; for thereby is bred as great a barrenness of Faith. Wherefore what the Censures of Men may be I am not at all solicitous, well knowing, that Men of truth and good Learning will judge like themselves, by whom I had rather be deservedly controul'd, than by all others to be ignorantly commended. For the words of the Righteous and Learned are as refin'd Silver, and their Lips drop as the Honey-comb, for whom I have waited long, earnestly wishing to see something from them concerning this Subject; but failing of my Expectation, I resolv'd at last, to collect the chief Signs of our prodigious times

times, and carefully observe their signification: that if good, we might rest in hopes, and if evil, that we might not be surpriz'd with sudden fear, or of the desolation of the Wicked when it comes in a Moment. And this I did at first (till I was further prevail'd upon) for private use, being very sensible of my own inabilities and want of time to publish a Work of so great consideration; therefore in the following Discourse, the Scholastick Arts of Ornament and Eloquence are not to be expected, that being none of my Talent, or what I regard; but there are divers weighty Matters hitherto kept secret, most freely and plainly deliver'd, a full and ample Proof whereof I have purposely omitted, intending this but as a short Abstract, written in great haste, and set out in a plain and homely Dress.

THE PREFACE.

IT is certain that Prophesie by immediate Inspiration has been a long time ceas'd, although many since have pretended to it, and more has been deceived by it. For now is the dark time of the Night come upon us (wherein that Heavenly Light is far removed) and the hour of Satan, in which deceits and wickedness are exceeding great. For when the Blessed Spirit of Truth had sufficiently informed and confirm'd the Church of Christ by great Works, and extraordinary Revelations, there was then no more occasion for immediate Inspiration: Under which Divine Dispensation it is manifest the Church still remains. Therefore now there is no Art or Means whereby we may converse with Angels, or receive a certain immediate Answer from Heaven, notwithstanding all the pretences of many to this purpose. For it is the opinion of some, and in particular of a late ingenuous Author, that Prophesie is now attainable; not only by particular Persons, but whole Churches in general. To which I Answer: That how true soever this may be in

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due time, yet at present it can't reasonably be expected, by-
reason the time permitted unto Satan for the Trial of the
Faith and patience of the Saints, is not yet ended, nor
the Day Star of Prophesie risen, wherein God will pour out
abundance of his Spirit, as the Waters cover the Sea.
For God has appointed a certain time for Prophesie, as well
as all other things; and therefore a time also wherein to
withhold that Blessed Spirit, in which no Humane Inden-
vour are able to recall it; as it was long since intimated
by the same Divine Spirit, saying, The Night cometh
wherein no man can work, John 9. 4. And as all
Natures are not appointed to Prophesie, so neither are all Per-
sons capable of it; nay, I may say very few. For as
all Ground cannot bring forth an Hundred fold, and as
there is but little Earth whereof Gold is made; so the
mistake is in this matter, for all men have not Faith,
and but few a right common Faith, and therefore very
few a true special Faith. Which Faith as it is the Per-
fection of Humane Nature, it is not easily obtained, but
as Gold, and other excellent things it requires much La-
bour and time the Production. Not but that God can
make that perfect in a Moment, which otherwise requires
many years; yet this no man may pretend unto without
the power of Miracles. Neither may any man that has
attained to some Degree of a special Faith pretend to
Prophesie, for every such a Faith hath its true effects but
as occasions offer, and at certain times, known only to the
Spirit of God: for Man knows not such Times, but is
very weak to discovering the Errors of his own Faith,
and stands in great need of good Advice from some of
the upper Form in the School of special Faith and Pro-
phesie.

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And although a Man indeavour long for a special Faith, as Thirty or Forty Years, setting his greatest Love and Labour from his Youth for the Spirit of God and Prophesie, keeping his best Affections constantly warm'd with Divine Love, the only Parent and true Evidence of a great Faith in God, I say, although such a Man know more than Humane Learning can teach him, and stands fairest for, or nearest to the Spirit of Prophesie that Humane Nature can approach (as having perform'd the highest Service, or most delectable Sacrifice that mortal Man can offer to his Maker) yet such a man may not pretend unto it till the hour comes, known only to Almighty God, where in all probability the Church in general is to be Reform'd and Confirm'd. I intend not this to perswade any from their endeavours for a special Faith or Prophesie, but rather to rectifie the mistakes about it, left some weak Author or vain Fancy should lead into Error: for innumerable are the Follies of false Guides, to these sublime Mysteries, there being nothing more catching than vain conjectures concerning these Spiritual Matters, or future Contingents, in the Study whereof, some Melancholy, Hot or Potent Imagination most easily gains the Ascendant.

But although it pleases Almighty God, for divers gracious ends, sometimes to visit with the Spirit of Prophesie, and reserve to himself the perfect knowledge of his Judgments to come, yet it hath always pleased the same Divine Goodness not to send any great Calamities or Alterations in the World without early premonitions, by many notable Signs and Tokens; the truth of which is so clear throughout all Ages, that there is no occasion in the least to doubt of it. Therefore although it be great Presumption and Boldness for Men to pretend to the perfect knowledge of future Contin-

gents, yet it is no less Absurd, and great Stupidity, not to regard those gracious Warnings which it pleases God daily to give by his Word, and by his Works. For this is that prodigious Blackishness that renders Man most obnoxious to the Wrath of God, and lead some blindfold into the greatest Destructions that ever happens in the World. Therefore although it be good to keep close the Secrets of a King, yet it is an undoubted Duty, diligently to observe and declare the Works of God. And how difficult soever it may be to Sail well in the Ocean of Futurity, yet certainly he that steddily Steers by the Milky Way, or Golden Mean, shall never run upon the Rocks of Presumption and Enthusiasm on the one hand, nor fall into the Gulph of Incredulity and Stupidity on the other. And although to be a perfect Master in these matters, requires the best Learning and brightest Parts, yet so much as is of greatest use, and most necessary to be known, it pleases God to make plain to meaner Capacities.

The Introduction.

ALthough Iniquity be mightily magnified upon Earth, and Unrighteousness grow up unto Heaven, yet in a little time, long before the final Conflagration, it shall be cut down and utterly destroyed Root and Branch; for so saves the Word, which we are sure is Faithful and True. Therefore it hath pleased Almighty God to declare from the beginning what great Works he will do in the latter dayes, for the destruction of the Wicked, and establishing the Righteous in Universal Peace, and great Blessedness, call'd the Kingdom of God and of Christ, so much spoken of in Sacred Scripture, and desired of all Holy Men in all Ages. But how in general this Glorious Work will be Transacted, I proceed now to lay down, in as plain and few words as may be.

And First we are to understand, that (answerable to the Four Elements, and Four quarters of Heaven) it hath pleased Almighty God to ordain Four great Ends or Changes of the World, to accomplish his Mysterious Works therein.

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The First was that in the days of *Noah*, by the Universal Flood.

The Second was the Redemption of the World by the coming of the *Messiah*, and vanquishing of Satan Spiritually.

The Third will be Vanquishing of Satan Temporally in his Members, by destroying all the Ungodly with all manner of Plagues, and mighty Judgments of the Wrath of God; as great and universal Thunder, Lightning, Earthquakes, Pestilence, Famine, destructive Storms and Floods, followed with the calling of the *Jews*, and establishing a Remnant with *Jerusalem* in universal Peace, Righteousness and Unity.

The Fourth is the Final Conflagration, that is after a long and blessed Tranquility, when Satan shall again disturb the Peace of the Church, Fire comes down from Heaven, Consuming, Changing, and Spiritualizing the whole World, preserving the People of God out of any more evil, and purifying *Jerusalem* to perfection of Bliss. And the rest of the Earth being under the Curse of God, there the Fire shall never go out, which is the great Hell and Habitation of all those who are shut out of *Jerusalem*, or the Lambs Book of Life.

It is the Third of these Changes that is next approaching, the great Signs whereof are the Subject of this Book, because it calls for as great precaution, as that did before the deluge in the days of *Noah*. It coming most suddenly by universal Earthquakes, and other Judgments in a Moment. But notwithstanding this great and general destruction, as is before noted, some few will be saved, as well *Jews* as others, which then shall be united in great Heedfulness, call'd *the Kingdom of God*, of

of Heaven, or *of Christ*. The misunderstanding whereof having been so destructive to the *Jews*, and fatal to others; with great exercising of the Faith of many well-minded people. I shall now proceed to lay down the right Notion of it.

And First; We are to understand, as aforesaid, that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, or *of Christ*, will come upon Earth as well as in Heaven; that is, a time wherein Truth and Righteousness, Unity and Peace shall fill the Earth *as the waters cover the Sea*. All the Ungodly being destroy'd by the great Judgments of Almighty God will occasion as great a Change as that in the days of *Noah*; and a new World will succeed, like that after the Flood. Which occasion'd our Saviour to declare, *that his Kingdom was not of this World*; no more than *Noah* and his Sons was of that before the Deluge.

Secondly, The Kingdom of Christ is not to be begun or continued by the Sword, or any Instrument of War; but the whole Work is to be accomplished by the Miraculous Finger of God, and the Administration of one single Person, whom Almighty God, and his Son Jesus Christ, will mightily inspire for this purpose. And this is he upon whom so much of the Spirit of Christ descends, that he is represented in Holy Scripture as the *Messiah* himself, although but Spiritually, and the Minister of all Temporal Felicity to the Church, (which occasion'd some of the Learned *Jews* to understand two *Messiah's*, the one poor and mean, and the other a glorious Prince; but herein also they are a little mistaken, for the *Messiah* is but one, although the Execution of his

his Office be double bodied, as Man himself is, and as Antichrist also is. For the *Pope* and *Mahomet*, although two, yet are they but one Antichrist.) Wherefore this Excellent Person before mention'd is he upon whom our Blessed Saviour in the *Revelations* writes all his own Names and Titles, setting him in his own Throne with himself; and of the great Affection between these two *Solomon* most excellently Prophesied and Sung throughout the whole Book of the *Canticles*, calling him the *only one of his mother*, the Church, the most excellent or choice one thereof. His Youth, as the *Psalmist* hath it, shall be *renewed like that of an Eagle*, and, as our Saviour, *shall never taste of Death*. Who coming last, is preferred first and chief of all Saints; and as St. *Paul* expresses it, *obtains the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*.

Thus the Execution of the *Messiah*'s Office, consisting of two parts, Spiritual and Temporal, and to be accomplished at a vast distance of time asunder, was the occasion of the *Jews* miserable mistake; and the reason also that our Saviour did not answer so plainly to the Questions put to him (whether he was the *Messiah*) as was expected; for he knew that he was then to accomplish but the first or Spiritual part of it; and therefore answer'd, *Thou hast said it*, or sometimes not at all; which they thought look'd like a Morose or Sullen Inclination, the which was far from him, that was of the most sweet obliging temper in the World. For the Spirit of God doth not reveal the Secrets of God but in their proper Times and Seasons.

Wherefore the right understanding of these things, makes all our Saviours Precepts, with the Holy Prophets,

phets most plain and easie, whereas the strange Comments and ignorant Allegories that are put upon them, has occasion'd the great Atheism and Impiety that now reigns so prodigiously in the World. But concerning this excellent Person, or second Faith, full and true Witness before mention'd, by whom our Saviour will accomplish the second part of his Office. I say of him much more is spoken in holy Scripture, which at present I omit, and shall only add, that altho' the holy Church be the Spouse of Christ in general, yet this is the Man in particular, by whom he will bring in the *Jews*, and govern and gather his Church from all quarters by greater Miracles than ever were done in the World, establishing them with *Jerusalem* in all terrestrial Tranquility, for a thousand Years unto the coming of the final Conflagration; which great and last Change also will not, in all probability, remove the Church into any other Region, but only burn up the Dross, and change *Jerusalem* to full perfection; and the rest of the Earth being under the Curse of God, there the Fire shall never go out; and that is the Hell wherein the Ungodly shall continue, and *Jerusalem* the habitation of the Just to all Eternity. These things, and more to this purpose, is very plain in the word of God, altho' much Error and blind Allegories have greatly corrupted it. Therefore rightly to understand the Kingdom of Christ, is not to build Castles in the Air, or any the like unintelligible Fancies, so uneasie to the Faith, and hard to human Understanding; for the truth is plain and natural, easily accommodated to the Reason and Capacities of Mankind. Thus having given this brief Account concerning the Kingdom of Christ, let us look

back a little (for we cannot reflect too much) upon that most dreadful time that immediately precedes it, the terribleness whereof being so great and thrice prodigious, that it is understood by some of the weaker Divines, to be the final end of the World; as indeed it is to the wicked part of it, as it was in the days of *Noah*, altho' (in this many more will be saved) in another manner, for that was by only one Plague of Rain and Water, but in this grand Revolution, all the four Elements will be armed with Death against the Ungodly. When the Almighty arises to shake terribly the Earth [illegible], and the Heavens also; as he has promised, more or less, by all his Servants the Prophets; the dreadfulness whereof the Holy Pen-men seem to want Words to express, calling it a time of trouble, such as never was, nor never shall be; and our Saviour adds, that unless that time be shorten'd, none should escape with Life; but for the Elect sake, those Days shall be shorten'd, therefore it is not the final End. But Men being so fast glew'd to the World (as it was in the Days of *Noah* and *Lot*) they will not see these things, how plain soever they be in the word of God, because divers Men put false and different Interpretations upon the Scripture; and as the Jewish Church was blinded with humane Traditions at the coming of our Saviour, so in this Generation with the like Errors. For however the Men of our times may boast of their great Light, Life and clear Understanding, yet the *Jews* were not so much mistaken about the temporal Kingdom of Christ as the World at this Day is, for they err'd only in the time and manner of its appearance; but now when it is near approaching, Men will never have it to come

at all; which is as great a contradiction as can be put upon the Word of God; it being moſt abſurd to believe, that our bleſſed Saviour would teach us to pray for that that ſhould never be, and that having vanquiſhed Satan ſpiritually, ſhould leave the Work half done, and never compleat his Victory temporally. Moreover, that the bleſſed Spirit of Truth ſhould tell us ſuch things in holy Scripture concerning theſe Judgments and bleſſed Age of the Church, as plain as words can expreſs it, and yet deceive us by other Meanings, and obſcure Intentions; this, I ſay, alſo, is very abſurd, if not ſinful to believe; for as there is nothing more plain, ſo nothing may be more abundantly proved throughout the Book of God. But that not being my Task or Intention at this time, I ſhall conclude this Introduction with this Obſervation. That whether the great Judgments that are now approaching are thoſe that immediately precede the coming of the *Jews* and the Kingdom of Chriſt, we may judge by the Signs following. But of this we may be ſure, that in the Hand of God there is a Cup of Wine or Wrath exceeding red; and alſo ready to be poured out, as will more plainly appear by the ſuperlative Preſages that now follow.

THE GREAT SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

NOW altho' this Subject be very Copious, and may afford much Matter to inlarge upon, yet my Intentions are at this time to contract it: therefore in writing to the Signs of our times I shall observe this following Method, and rank them (as they naturally fall) under these three Heads, Namely, *Spiritual*, *Celestial*, and *Terrestrial*; of all which I shall proceed with as much Brevity as may be. And in this order the *Spiritual* comes first to be consider'd, the which are chiefly taken from the Manners of Men in general, or that of Religion in the World; the Reason whereof is very plain, in that God hath so often declared, and all Ages so sadly experienced, the great Judgments that

that have always follow'd the contempt of it; therefore it highly concerns us most carefully to observe how Religion stands or falls in Mens Practises; for if fallen, or mortally wounded, then surely a more dreadful Prognostick never happened under the Copes of Heaven. And in order hereunto we are to understand, that there are some Vices which strike most directly at the Heart or Vitals of Religion, which are these following, Namely, Deceit and Hypocrisie, Pride and Cruelty, hardness of Heart and Carnal Security. This is that diabolical Brood so hateful to God and dangerous to Mankind, that the Holy Ghost has set a Mark upon them in the Scripture, lest Men coming to new Vices, should fall into the Pit of destruction; for the substance or Life of Religion consists in truth and love to God and Man, with Faith, Obedience, and Repentance; therefore Deceit and Hypocrisie are like *Judas* and *Peter*, they betray and condemn Religion; after them comes Pride and Cruelty, like the Officers and Soldiers to our Saviour, and they stab Religion, or the Lamb of God, to the Heart; then comes Hardness of Heart and Carnal Security, and they go to hiding the Murther, like the obstinate *Jews*, till the Wrath of God arises and there is no remedy. Thus the Truth suffered in the sacred Person of our blessed Saviour; and it was not long before that People so suffered for it in a miserable destruction of that Nation. For such is the nature of Truth and Love to God and Man, that when it is most oppress't and beaten down by Men's Practices, then it is that it arises in destruction of its Enemies, as a divine and immortal Power, it being the sacred Off-spring of Almighty God, and that only part

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of himself, resident here upon Earth: It is certain all Men that presume to persevere in rebellion against it, may justly expect not only Destruction here, but eternal Misery hereafter. Above all things therefore, let all Men take heed how they forsake the Truth, for the Word of God that is Truth; which Truth being the Rock of Ages, our only Foundation, whereupon the Happiness of the whole World stands, it is certain when Men depart from it, they pull down the superstructure upon their own Pates, and miserably perish in the Ruins. Pride goes before a fall, and so does Hardness of Heart and Carnal Security, as well as a haughty look before destruction; for altho' all those Vices before mention'd be very black and dreadful signs of God's Wrath, yet it is certain, that Cruelty, Hardness of Heart, and Carnal Security are the more immediate fore-runners thereof; for Oppression and Cruelty are quite opposite to the great Command of Love, and chief End of Religion or Christianity. Hardness of Heart also and Carnal Security, set Men at the greatest distance from all the divine Methods to Repentance, and therefore past all hopes of recovery and amendment. This is the Wickedness therefore that once drowned the World, and is very likely (as I shall plainly prove) a second time to lay it desolate, altho' not in the same manner, yet full out as fatal to the followers of Vice; for when this violent Monster of Cruelty, Hardness of Heart and Carnal Security, shall compass the Earth, as he did the old World, then it is that the great Almighty arises to shake terribly the Earth, as he has often declared more or less by most of his Servants the Prophets, and to pour out the full Viols of his Wrath, as it is written in the divine Revelations. Now if at this

this time we take a view of the World thro' the sacred Glass of God's word, and rightly observe the Visions before mentioned, how justly may we cry out with the Prophet *Habbakkuk*, *When I heard, my belly trembled, rottenness entred into my bones, that I might find rest in the day of trouble.* But as it was in the days of *Noah* and *Lot*, Men of carnal and worldly Minds will object, saying, The World was always vicious, and therefore we will not believe such Signs, what a noise soever some may make about 'em. To which I answer, that altho' the World has been always bad enough, yet they have always suffered for it; but never to such a degree as such a juncture of time since the universal Flood. Therefore by what has already been intimated to the great Wrath of God is sufficiently signified to the World. But the more near approach of that dreadful Day, let us make some further Observations out of the word of God, and so proceed to his Works.

But here arises another Objection, namely, That we are not to search or pry into such things, our Saviour having told us, that the Day of God's Judgment shall come as a Thief, and as a Snare upon the whole World; and that it was not for his very Apostles to know the times and seasons. To all which I answer, that altho' it shall come as a Thief upon the World, yet St. *Paul* has assur'd us, that it shall not be so to the Children of Light; therefore it is Men's carnal and worldly Affections that clouds the Soul, and darkens the Eye of Faith, which will be the sad occasion of this sudden surprize; for enlightening Grace cannot enter into such a Soul, therefore it belongs not to the World, no not to the most learned of it, notwithstanding the good help that hu-

human Learning lends. And as for the Apoſtles, it was needleſs for them, as our Saviour told 'em, to trouble themſelves about theſe latter times ſo far remote from them, they having buſineſs enough to mind concerning that Age wherein they lived; but it is certain, that God does enlighten ſome one or more of his Servants in thoſe times wherein they are concerned, as may be proved from many places of holy Scripture. And altho' it may not be much material to ſearch into the very Day or Hour, yet near the matter we may ſafely gueſs, to the glory of God and good of his People, for which End our Saviour himſelf has given many Signs in general of the near approach of that dreadful time, wherein the World will be ſurprized as it was in the days of *Noah* and of *Lot*, mint with ſome of early intent concerning *Jeruſalem*, and others very late, when that diſmal Day is come, or beginning, as that of the Sea roaring, and Men's Hearts failing for fear, and for looking after thoſe things that are coming upon the World; this, I ſay, will not be till that fatal time is begun, when that in the Revelations will be verified, *Let him that is wicked be wicked ſtill*. For Judgment being come, it will be to late for a timely repentance and preparation for Death, therefore that immediately preceding, concerning the diſtreſs of Nations with perplexity, or Powers ſtanding in fear, is the moſt near Precaution left by our bleſſed Saviour, the which, if rightly conſidered, is the ſame with that of Violence and Cruelty, which immediately fore-run the deſtruction of the old World; by which revealed Rule, if we meaſure the World at this time, it may be found, in all likelyhood, as ripe for Judgment as it was in the days of *Noah* or

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of *Law*; and notwithstanding there are now some promises of Peace, yet all Nations stand in fear, by reason of the prodigious Deceit, Violence, and Cruelties that are practic'd in the World. Moreover it hath pleas'd Almighty God to do great things for us of these Nations, as well in Mercy as in Judgment, so very plain and eminent, that it is a great question, If the most barbarous Infidels, having the same means, would not have been wrought upon to the love of God, their Countrey, and one another; but instead of that behold the quite contrary, and the Vices before mention'd grown greater than ever; insomuch that it is thought by some, that even *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* never arriv'd to such degrees of Beastliness and Impieties; therefore when neither Judgments nor Mercies will work upon Men, it is manifest, that they are past the gracious Methods of Divine Providence, and arriv'd to a reprobate Sense, after which nothing remains but a fearful looking for of Judgment and revelation of God's righteous Judgments. Further also, Has not the purity of Gods word, or the Truth, that heavenly Resident upon Earth, been persecuted this Five Hundred Years past, with prodigious Pride, and Cries of innocent Blood? And at this Day, beyond the Seas, is it not stamp'd under Foot with great Impudence and Affront to the God of Truth, beyond, one would think, even Almighty Patience? And to come home to our own corner of the World, whereunto Truth fled for refuge, raising her main Bull-wark, and has been best supported, I say, among our selves, where her last Hopes are fix'd. Is not Truth, Love, and Unity so much beaten down by Men's Practices, that it is past all hopes of Recovery from any earthly Power? To which, if we look as *Isaiah* has prophecy'd, we may see and

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wonder, that there is none to uphold; therefore as it follows in the same place, God will support it with his own Arm in a miserable destruction of his Enemies. For as the Royal Psalmist has foretold us, God will arise when Men have made void his Truth; And as St. *Paul*, when Men cry Peace, Peace, then sudden Destruction shall come upon them, as Travel upon a Woman, and they shall not escape. Much more may be collected out of sacred Writ concerning this Subject, but that would far exceed my intended Brevity; therefore let these Signs suffice out of the word of God; and so I proceed to his Works.

THE Coelestial Signs.

AND, according to the Method propos'd, the Coelestial Signs come next to be consider'd; the which are chiefly taken from the Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars, that is, several Suns or Moons appearing at one time; also Comets, or new Stars, great Conjunctions, and other notable configurations of the Heavenly Bodies. In treating of which, I shall take the planets and the old way, as above, all curious Speculations, and only observe that undeniable Verity, That divers Suns, Moons, or new Stars, are extraordinary Signs of God's Wrath. But before I enter upon these Observations, it will be necessary to answer a common Objection, namely, That we Christians are not subject to, or need not fear the Signs of Heaven. To which I answer, That I heartily wish Christianity were arriv'd to that Perfection in Mens Practices, that they need not fear, that they walk through the Vale of the Shadow of Death. But since this is quite otherwise, our Vices being grown so prodigious, we have as much occasion to fear the Wrath of God as any

any other People, and to tremble at the Signs thereof. Indeed we are not to fear the Signs of Heaven with a ſervile ſervile Fear, which concerns our Eſtates or Bodies only, like the Heathens of old and Worldlings of our times, but ſuch a Fear as leads to repentance and amendment of Life: this, ſurely is a wiſe and lawful Fear. But although (in the State we are now in) the Stars are Signs to Chriſtians, and all Men in general, yet it is with ſome difference; for this we are always to remember, that the whole Frame of Heaven, or great Wheel of Nature, moves conſtantly upon the Finger of God, who turns the ſignification of the Stars ſometimes to nothing, and ſometimes to great effects, as may beſt ſerve the ſpiritual welfare of the true Chriſtian, and deſtruction of the reprobate; there being a more than natural Power always attending the Elect, which adds or diminiſhes the Aſtral Effects according to the eternal welfare of the Righteous. Moreover, when a Man attains to a ſpecial Faith or Prophecy, then alſo he moves in a higher Sphere, and is aſſiſted by the Spirit of God, too ſtrong for the Starry Powers. And thus it will be with Chriſtians in general, when Chriſtianity arrives to its Meridian luſtre, when God will pour out ſuch abundance of his Spirit, that Truth, Love, and Righteouſneſs ſhall fill the Earth as the Waters cover the Sea; then it is that the taking of an Oath will be out of faſhion, becauſe of the abundance of Truth it will be altogether needleſs, and becauſe of the glorious Eſtabliſhment in Unity, Peace, and Plenty, the taking thought for the future will vaniſh alſo; but in the ſtate we are now in the moſt ſacred Oaths are not ſtrong enough to tye Men to Truth, nor the moſt prudent care for this Life too much, becauſe we are to

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one another as Wolves and Beasts of Prey; therefore in this deprav'd state the Stars are not only Signs to Christians in general, but also to every Man in particular, if a spiritual and true use were made of it; for such is the dignity of the Soul of Man, as preceding immediately from God, that those glorious Bodies the Stars were made subservient to it, and to signifie what is like to be most fatal to it in its passage through this World; as thus, to signifie what Vices are like to get into our Affections, more than to tell our earthly Fortunes; for thereby the Soul is often wounded when the Body is in great Prosperity. And here we may truly say with the Royal Psalmist, *Great and glorious are thy works, O Lord, and to be searched out by all those that take pleasure therein.* But I have digress'd, and therefore return to the Celestial Meteors before mentioned.

Now among the numerous Signs of the Sun, Moon and Stars that have past us of late Years, I shall only observe some of the chief or extraordinary, as being most material to my purpose: For although there hath been some Years past several Comets, and divers eminent Configurations of the heavenly Bodies, yet most of them being but common Precautions, a period may therefore be put to their portents; but that most prodigious Comet in the Year 1680, although so long since, hath not yet ended his Errand; for it was plain at the time of appearance, that the Message it brought was as universal as it was visible, and that it would be as long a doing as Full or Sea could extend: and that the portents of this Comet were very great and extraordinary, the dregs whereof are yet to come, no Man though but meanly read in these matters can scruple, especially when consider'd with the preceding and succeeding Signs thereof; for the most dreadful portents are

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sufficiently confirm'd by that grand configuration of the three superiour Planets in a most violent fixed Sign, near a most eminent fixed Star, made thrice prodigious by a triple Conjunction of the two Superiors in 1682, usher'd in with numerous Prodigies, and succeeded with Signs in the Sun and Moon, as the Gazetts and News-papers of those times abundantly testifie; therefore all these Signs duly consider'd (tho' so long since) do yet signifie very great Judgments to be coming upon the World, and the extraordinary or thrice prodigious Portion thereof, with the considerable (from their appearance) time before they commence, is plainly added by that great meeting before mention'd of the most ponderous Planets in the fixed Cœlestial Lyon near *Cor Leonis*; For where fixed Stars in the first Magnitude are concerned, they make an extraordinary addition of the signifie, whether it be good or evil, both which are eminently signifie'd in this grand Configuration, by the natural good and bad mixture of the significatures. Moreover, fixed Stars being the most ponderous, prodige things at the greatest distance of time, and therefore their signification is long a coming; the which, with those other Considerations, makes it plainly appear, that the greatest portents of this triple Conjunction will not be manifest till about Seventeen or Eighteen Years, or towards the latter end of Twenty Years (from 1682) signify'd at the time of Celebration, insinuating a returning of Wrath and Calamities at last, when Men cry Peace, Peace, and imagine the worst is past; therefore now is the most dangerous time approaching by their natural signification. At which time also the spiritual Signs of God's Wrath being so great, as I have shew'd, it is highly reasonable to believe, that the extraordinary Wrath of God

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will be poured out under these Configurations and great Signs from Heaven, because there has not been the like so aptly to signifie it, nor will be within the compass of human Understanding.

Therefore let no Man think it strange that the World should be concern'd with these Signs from Heaven so long past; for these are the great and universal Judgments of the third grand Revolution mention'd in the Introduction, like that in the Days of *Noah*, of which the World had notice by *Noah*, with the building of the Ark; and in all probability, by other Signs, near an Hundred Years before the Flood came. But some Men, affecting Curiosity, have studied Astrology separate from Divinity, and will needs have the Stars to be Causes, and therefore their Effects must soon follow. To which I answer, That how true soever this is in elementary Matters, yet as to Mankind, whose chiefest better part is solutual and supernatural, they are certainly Signs, and sometimes at a great distance of time; wherefore some Men make the Stars greater Causes than indeed they are, calling the Judgments of God the Effects thereof, whereas in truth there are no Calamities in the World, but what are the Effects of Sin and Folly, wonderfully signify'd by the Stars, long before they come to pass, by their miraculous Motions and Configurations, wherein the Finger of God is daily visible, and his Praise to be magnify'd by all that love him.

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THE Terreſtrial Signs.

THESE having been conſidered the Signs of the [illegible] Wrath of God, both Spiritual and [illegible] in the third Place, to make ſome further Conſiderations, which, for Method ſake, I call Terreſtrial, that is, by a three-fold Confirmation there may be the leſs room left for Doubts and Incredulity. Now although the Signs are very many that ſometimes fall under this Head, yet the chief, or moſt material are Earthquakes, Peſtilence, Famine, with deſtructive Storms and Floods; for when any of the four Elements break forth beyond their ordinary Bounds, proceeding to great Violence and Deſtruction, what natural Reaſons ſoever may be given for it, they are certainly great Signs of the Wrath of God, ſent into the World as Scourges for amendment of Life; which, if not checked, greater and more dreadful deſtruction will certainly follow. For how cunningly ſoever ſome Men may pry into the occaſion of Earthquakes, or other Prodigies and Signs, giving many natural Reaſons to abate the wonder, I ſay, although herein

in they may show a little Wit, yet nothing of sound Wisdom; it being certain, that such curious Speculations tend more to a kind of Atheism, than to the true use for which God has ordain'd such great Works.

Now if we look back into the Signs of the Times but 18 or 19 Years, for so long we have just occasion to deprecate, being still, as I have shew'd, under the dreadful portents of a prodigious Comet, and grand Configurations in 1682, I say, what a large account may be collected of the Signs of this Nature. Great destructive Storms, Floods, Pestilence, Famine, Earthquakes, and other the like Occurrences, so universal and numerous, that to decend to Particulars, would fill up a large Volume. All which, tho' they may partly be the common or ordinary Effects and Portents of some preceding Comets and Configurations, yet that lessens not their signality, they still remaining great Signs of Divine Wrath, as is evident from the word of God, and experience of the most judicious Observers. For what Causes soever the Stars may be in elementary Matters (as is before noted) yet, as to Mankind, they are certainly Signs, and often at a great distance of time; therefore these Terrestrial Tokens (what Causes soever some Men assign to 'em) are doubtless a great confirmation of the extraordinary portents of that great Comet, and grand Configuration before mention'd, there being something extraordinary in them, as I have already prov'd, far beyond any of the like Nature.

Now that there should be Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars, is not the thing I insist upon, but their happening at such a time, and in such an extraordinary place of the Zodiack; and that there should be upon Earth distress of Nations, with Pestilence, Famine, Earthquakes, violent

Storms and Floods, is not the great wonder, but that all these should happen at such a time when the spiritual Signs of God's Wrath are so great, and Truth and Righteousness at the last gasp; at such a time when the truth and purity of God's word is so much abus'd, and really to despair the World, without hopes of Recovery by Man; at such a time, when, if we consider the latter Days in the Prophetic sense, we may be sure that these are the last Hours wherein Vice hath to reign; at such a time when the Numbers in the Prophet *Daniel* and the Revelations, according to our best Understanding, are at a period. I say, these Considerations add extraordinarily to their signality, and give good ground to believe that they point at the chief grand Revolution mention'd in the Introduction; wherein God will make what he has promis'd, taking to himself his great Power to reform the World, and to cut off all the Ungodly, that Truth and Righteousness, Peace and Unity, may be establish'd in the Earth. Therefore let no Worldling or vicious Person encourage himself, saying, That the Scriptures speaking of this great Revolution, are not to be understood temporally, or in a literal Sense, and that God will never inspire another Man to work Miracles to gather and settle his Church; for such Assertions have no foundation in the word of God, and therefore nothing but a blind and sinful Imagination to support 'em; it being certain, that the holy Scriptures abound with variety of Truth, and that many places of it in a three or four fold Sense; therefore let Men take heed how they confine some places only to a spiritual or allegorical meaning, for before the End they will be as truly verify'd in a literal Sense, and not a Tittle thereof shall fall to the Ground. Neither let any Man trust to vain Prophecies, in particular, that of

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great Antiquity, falsly father'd upon *Elias*, which makes but three grand Intervals of time, that is, Two Thousand Years before the Law, thence Two Thousand to the Messiah, and Two Thousand Years after Christ; whereby they imagine Two or Three Hundred Years still to come, wherein the Wicked may possess the Earth. But this is vain Cabalistical stuff, having nothing of the sure word of God to support it; and what sound Wisdom soever some of the Learned may see in it, yet it is far more clear from holy Scripture, and therefore rational to believe, that the Prayers of all Saints, the Cries of the Martyrs, and Groans of innocent Blood, will prevail with God to send forth his Judgments, to shorten the time and to hasten his Kingdom, that Truth and Righteousness, Peace and Unity, may fill the Earth as the Waters cover the Sea! Which God of his infinite Mercy send, and grant us a kiding place when he arises to make Inquisition for Blood, and for those that by their unrighteousness have hurt others; for with tender Mercy the Almighty will deliver those that consider, repent, and believe his Judgments. To conclude the substance and signs of what hath been assumed, is this, That all manner of Plagues exceeding dreadful are coming upon the World, to cut off the wicked part of it, and that in a very little time, as may appear from many of the Signs beforegoing. And this, as near as human Reason can guess, is that great time of trouble spoken of in holy Scripture, such as never was or ever shall be; in which time Almighty God and his Son Jesus Christ will mightily inspire an extraordinary Person, to defend, gather, and settle his Church in much heavenly Grace, and all earthly blessedness for a long Season, unto the coming of the final Conflagration, or great and general Day of Judgment. Now be-